

CHARITY RECOMMENDED ON IT'S TRUE MOTIVE.

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PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF
ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR
BLOOMSBURY,

BEFORE THE GOVERNORS
OF THE
BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION FOR THE
DELIVERY OF POOR MARRIED WOMEN
AT THEIR OWN HABITATIONS

ON SUNDAY, MARCH 30. 1788.

BY GEORGE HORNE, D.D.

DEAN OF CANTERBURY,

AND PRESIDENT OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

O X F O R D;

PRINTED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CHARITY.

SOLD BY D. PRINCE AND J. COOKE, OXFORD,
AND J. F. AND C. RIVINGTON, G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,
T. CADELL, LONDON. FLACKTON AND MARRABLE IN CANTERBURY.

MDCC LXXXVIII.

CRIMINAL RECORDS OF THE YEAR 1871

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S E R M O N

IN THE CHURCH

ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR

FROM MARY

BEFORE THE GOVERNORS

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

DELIVERED BY THE REV. FATHER

THEIR OWN HABITATIONS

AND APOSTLES

BY THE REV. FATHER

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

AND APOSTLES

OF THE UNIVERSITY

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TO
THE MOST NOBLE
THE MARQUIS OF CARMARTHEN,
PRESIDENT.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD VISCOUNT BULKELEY,
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD VISCOUNT MALDEN,
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD VISCOUNT GALWAY,
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD HOOD,

SIR ROBERT BARKER, BART.

SIR JOHN SMITH, BART.

SIR CECIL WRAY, BART.

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THOMAS JEFFERYS, ESQ. TREASURER;

AND THE REST OF THE GOVERNORS OF THE

BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION,

THIS DISCOURSE,

PREACHED AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS, WITH ALL RESPECT, INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR MOST FAITHFUL HUMBLE SERVANT,

GEORGE HORNE.

TO
THE MOST NOBLE
THE MARQUIS OF CARMARTHEN
PRESIDENT

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD VISCOUNT BUCKLEY
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD VISCOUNT MADDEN
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD VISCOUNT GALWAY
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IN WITH A VIEW TO BE ASSIGNED

BY THEIR MOST FAITHFUL HUMBLE SERVANT

GEORGE HORN

MADE IN
LONDON 1795

I J O H N iv. 11.

IF GOD SO LOVED US, WE OUGHT ALSO TO LOVE ONE
ANOTHER.

GREATER injustice cannot be done to the doctrines of Christianity, than to suppose them barren speculations, subjects intended only for the meditations of the pious in their closets, or the controversies of the learned in their writings; and issuing in no conclusions for the benefit of society, and the comfort of mankind. The contrary is happily evinced by the words just read, in which, allusion is made to the incarnation of the Son of God, as the great instance of the divine love toward us; and that love proposed as the principle and the pattern of our love toward our neighbour. “If God so loved us,” that he “sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins”—such are the words immediately preceding the text—then, “we ought also to love one another.” We might ask him, in whom zeal for the welfare of his fellow-creatures burns

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with the brightest and most ardent flame, what his patriotic and generous heart could wish more, than that men might be brought to this blessed temper of mind? Did it but prevail in its full extent, it would reform the world at once. Transgression would cease, and with it much of our misery and trouble. The reign of righteousness and happiness would commence, and paradise be, in great measure, restored upon earth. St. Paul assigns the reason, in very few words; "Love worketh no ill to its neighbour;" it can work him no ill; it can never injure him in his person, his bed, his property, or his character: it cannot so much as conceive a desire for any thing that belongs to him. But it resteth not content with negatives. It not only worketh him no ill, but it must work for him all the good in its power. Is he hungry? It will give him meat. Is he thirsty? It will give him drink. Is he naked? It will clothe him. Is he sick? It will visit him. Is he sorrowful? It will comfort him. Is he in prison? It will go to him, and, if possible, bring him out. Upon this ground, wars must for ever cease among nations, dissensions of every kind among lesser societies, and the individuals that compose them. All must be peace, because all would be love. And thus would every end of the incarnation be accomplished; good will to men, peace on earth, and to God on high glory from both.

^a 1 Rom. xiii. 10.

In the farther prosecution of the subject, your attention is requested to a few observations on the *motive* proposed by St. John for the duty of charity; and the best *manner* of performing the duty upon that motive.

Many seem to think, that if charity be but shewn, the motive is a matter of indifference. It may be so to the party receiving, but not to the party bestowing. A sick person is equally benefited, whether he, who sits by his bedside, sits there from real affection, or with design to make a will in his own favour. Nothing can determine the sterling worth of an action, but a knowledge of the motive upon which it is performed. Here, then, we should be very careful not to deceive ourselves. We should deal fairly, and search our hearts to the bottom. In the day of inquisition and retribution, he who made them, and therefore knows what is in them, will certainly do so. Men and angels, on that day, will be made acquainted not only with all we have done, but with the true reasons why we did it; and the transactions of human life will be found far other than they seem. Nay, there are, even now, men of the world, endowed with sagacious and penetrating minds, who, judging partly from what they experience in themselves, and partly from what they have observed in others, are not easily imposed upon. By knowing a person's general character, and laying circumstances together, they

will give a shrewd guess at what is passing within, and not be led to take the ostensible motive for the real. Some French authors, and, after them, some English ones, writing upon this plan, have given a very unfavourable representation indeed of human nature. Their *maxims* are by no means universally true ; but might be rendered serviceable, if we made use of them, not to censure *others*, but to examine *ourselves* ; not to judge our neighbours, but to let our own consciences plead, *Guilty*, or *Not Guilty*.

In the case before us, some information is necessary for us all, lest, after performing actions of charity, by performing them upon wrong and sinister motives, we become exposed to the mortification of losing their reward. We may perform them merely because there is a decency and propriety in so doing ; others perform them, and we should be thought meanly of, were we to omit them : we may perform them out of vanity, to acquire the character of benevolent ; a character, to which, perhaps, upon the whole, we have no good title : we may perform them out of envy, lest a rival bear off the honour from us : we may perform them to become popular, and serve by them some secular and political interest : we may perform them in the way of commutation for a favourite sin, in the practice of which we have determined to continue, and hope thus to buy off the punishment due to it. In this last article we shall find ourselves

ourselves grievously mistaken. In all the rest may be applied the words of our Lord; "You have your reward;" you fought the praise of men; you obtained it: you fought not the praise of God; you obtained it not.

THERE is yet another motive, concerning which the determination is more difficult—When we perform an act of charity, to escape from the pain we feel at the sight of misery. We relieve the object; but it is, to relieve ourselves. We hear much of these fine *feelings*, from persons who reject with disdain the influence of a higher principle. God forbid we should depreciate this humane and exquisitely tender sentiment, which the beneficent author of our nature gave us, as a spur to remove the distresses of others, in order to get rid of our own uneasiness. But it has been justly observed, that,

"where not strengthened by superior motives, it is a casual
 "and precarious instrument of good, and ceases to operate,
 "except in the immediate presence, and within the audible
 "cry of misery. This sort of feeling often forgets that any
 "calamity exists which is out of it's own sight, and though
 "it would empty its purse for such an occasional object as
 "rouses transient sensibility, yet it seldom makes any stated
 "provision for miseries, which are not the less real because
 "they do not obtrude upon the sight, and awaken the ten-
 "derness

“ derness of immediate sympathy. This is a sort of mechanical charity, which requires springs and wheels to set it “ a going.” *

NOT so the real christian charity, recommended in the text to be performed upon another motive — “ If God so “ loved us ”—as he hath done—we ought also to love one “ another : ” A motive at once *rational*, *pure*, and *permanent*.

I SAY, a *rational* motive. There is indeed a feeling and an affection in the case : but they are founded on the highest truth, and the strongest reason ; they are fixed and directed by the judgment. A friend has done me the greatest service in the world ; to his kindness I owe every good that I possess, every comfort that I enjoy. His kindness I will therefore return through life, in every instance which falls within my power. This is the principle : it is, in short, *gratitude* ; a principle, destitute of which, in social intercourse, the world itself scarce allows to any person more than the name of a man. Such is the idea universally entertained of ingratitude to a friend, a benefactor, a master, a parent, a prince. But does ingratitude, then, change it's nature, and put off it's deformity, when the object is the best of friends, the

* Thoughts on the Manners of the Great. P. 64.

most generous of benefactors, the most indulgent of masters, the tenderest of parents, and the most gracious of princes? God has made us, and redeemed us; he has given grace, and promised glory. He asks no other return, but that we love him; and as we can bring no advantage to him by so doing, that we transfer such love, for his sake, to our brethren; and he places it to his own account. In these circumstances, if we love not them, we cannot be deemed to love him. In the whole compass of our knowledge, there exists not, surely, a truth, which while it speaks so warmly to the human heart, approves itself so completely to the human understanding.

THE motive is likewise *pure*. It originates from all that is liberal, generous, and noble, in the soul of man. It has been said, There is a reward promised; and therefore it is mercenary. But they who say this seem not sufficiently to have considered the nature of the reward. I love my friend, and desire of course, to be with him, to enjoy his company and conversation, and to live in his presence. In all this there is nothing mercenary, nothing sensual, or selfish.^b Of such a kind is the reward promised by our heavenly Friend. The

^b "The self-love which aims at the rewards of another life, is perfectly consistent with social; the rewards being promised to those only who love their neighbours as themselves." See p. 203. of the Reverend Mr. Whitaker's *Sermons on Education*, just published, which well deserve the attention of all who are concerned in that useful and honourable employment.

desire

desire of it is no sign of the depravity, but of the exaltation and perfection of our souls. The body indeed will have it's share, but not in it's present state. It will be refined, it will be spiritualized; by the working of an almighty power, able to subdue all things to itself, it will be changed into the same image, from one degree of glory to another, and fashioned like unto that of it's great Saviour and Redeemer. The reward is intellectual and divine; and would be no reward to a person who was not himself become so. The motive therefore, notwithstanding the reward, is as pure as it is rational.

AND it is as *permanent* as it is pure. Is vanity our motive for charitable actions? It may cease. Is worldly interest? it may fail. Is fashion? It may vanish away. Is a feeling of compassion and sympathy? Such temperaments may change, and often do so. But the argument deduced from the love of God towards us can never fail, any more than that love on which it is founded. It meets us, when we arise in the morning, and when we go to our repose at night; when we behold the heavens, and the earth, and all the hosts of them, serving our necessities, and ministering to our enjoyments; when we find ourselves surrounded by our families and our friends; when we go out, and when we come in; above all, when, as now, we visit his temple, and hear, from his blessed word, the history of those wonderful works that he has wrought

wrought, and of the felicity he has prepared for us in another world, when this, in which we now live, shall be passed away, and gone into perdition. Often as we acknowledge these favours, and praise him for the mercy which endureth for ever, the question should occur, How can I acknowledge them, with what face can I praise him for them, if, after so much given, I am not ready, upon this principle, to give to others? Verily, our praises, as well as our prayers, will rise up in the judgment against us, and condemn us.—No—if we hope for final acceptance with our God, let us always, in our life and at our death, remember the inference in the text, and act upon it—“If God so loved us, we “ought also to love one another.”

THE strength of this inference, and the hold it has taken upon your minds, will appear this day, by the support afforded to an Institution which needs support, and deserves it.

It *needs* support, as relying solely on the voluntary contributions of well disposed persons, and must drop, if they are withholden. But it can never be—In this respect, without incurring the charge of self adulation, we may say, that all nations must yield the palm to Englishmen. At the first call of the kind, they readily “put their hands to the

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“plough;”

“plough;” and when they have so done, it is not their custom to “look back.”

THAT it *deserves* support, you will all be convinced, when it shall have been briefly stated to you, that the objects relieved by it are poor; that they are women; that they are married women, in the most painful and perilous situation; and that the relief is brought home to them, in their own houses.

GOD could have ordained that all should have been rich. But he has not so ordained. Poverty, with every other evil, came in, upon man's transgression. The alteration, which then took place in the earth, rendered labour necessary. If none were poor, none would labour; and if some did not labour, none could eat. Difference there must be in rank and order; and the rich are not of more service to the poor, than the poor to them. Equality of condition could not subsist by the constitution of nature, as the case has stood since the fall. It must be effected by a new way; by the dispensation of love and charity. The indigence of some must be helped by the superfluity of others. “The poor shall never cease out of thy land,” says the God of Israel to his favoured people; “therefore, I command thee saying, Thou shalt open thy hand wide to thy brother, to thy poor, and to
“ thy

"thy needy, in thy land." An opportunity of being blessed is offered to the wealthy, and they should take particular care not to let it pass them unregarded; for, "Blessed is the man that considereth the poor and needy." In the sight of God, we are all poor. "He openeth his hand," and from it we receive, both for our bodies and our souls, food and raiment, medicine, liberty, and joy. Our Saviour himself, rich in the possession of all things visible and invisible, yet for our sakes became poor; he has directed us, in the persons of the poor, to behold him, as present, and when they solicit our charity, to bestow it accordingly. On the behalf of poverty, more cannot be said.

BUT it is peculiarly afflictive, when it falls upon the weaker sex. At the sight of *them* in distress, few hearts are so hard as not to relent, and shew mercy and compassion. Formed originally from man, to man they of course look up for support. It is his duty, and, in all civilized nations, it has ever been his glory, to afford it. Their claim upon us is indeed a just one. They were created as help-mates, and through life are found to be such. From the cradle to the grave, from the swaddling clothes to the winding sheet, we are indebted to their good offices; offices which can with propriety be performed by them alone. By them is the bur-

^a Deut. xv. 11.

den of cares domestic and œconomical taken off from us. The tenderness and sympathy of their nature alleviate our sorrows, their affection and fidelity double our joys.

THE persons assisted by our Benevolent Institution are *married* women. For those in a single state, whom thoughtless, unfeeling, cruel profligacy had seduced, and over whom savage brutal lust had tyrannized for a time, and then cast them, destitute and forlorn, upon the public, where there was none to help; for such, I say, when sufferings, and the grace of God co-operating had led them to repentance, and to seek forgiveness, where we must all seek it, at the hands of a Redeemer—for such, a house of refuge has been opened, and ample provision made in it of all the assistance requisite for the purpose. And a noble charity it is. “There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth;” there is a joy peculiar to the circumstance of the sheep that is *found*, which cannot happen, unless that sheep has been *lost*. But let us not therefore, in the mean time, forget the wants sustained by such of the flock as, having not wandered, require attention and provision in the fold. “Marriage is honourable:” God has pronounced it to be so, and man cannot render it otherwise. By it’s offspring come the strength of kingdoms, the establishment of thrones, and the upholding of the world. Among the Romans, more than four ages elapsed, from the foundation of their city, without any complaint, or process, on

on account of adultery; and it was not till the year 521, that they saw the first divorce; when, though the cause was specious, the indignation of all Rome pursued the divorcer, to the end of his days. These men were heathens, but their morals put Christians wofully to the blush! Let us not be wanting in our endeavours to roll away the reproach which lies so *heavy* on the present generation by this instance of regard shewn to the honest and faithful married.

It is shewn at a time when they most need it—a time of distress and anguish, when they are suffering under the sentence passed from the beginning; when pains of body, sorrows of heart, and terrors of imagination, assail them with combined forces; when the enemy compasses them round about, and poverty has set all help at a distance. Their cries have been heard by the Lord of Sabaoth, and he hath raised up friends to their assistance. They have obtained mercy from God to be “saved in child-bearing;” they should obtain it from you. If it be true, as the wise man has observed, that “by a woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die;” no less true it is, that when the Saviour was born, “by a woman came the beginning of *righteousness*, and “through her we all *live*.” “I am come,” says that Saviour himself, “that ye might have life; and that ye might have it more abundantly.” Evil is swallowed up by good; and it must be through our own fault, if we do not become gainers.

gainers by our loss. Sublime and beautiful is the exaltation of Mary, upon the occasion, over the great enemy—"My
 "soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced
 "in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness
 "of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth, all ge-
 "nerations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath
 "magnified me, and holy is his name; and his mercy is on
 "them that fear him, throughout all generations."

LASTLY, the persons for whom your benevolence is this day intreated, are not of the number of those wandring and professional mendicants, who meet you, at every turn, with their clamorous and importunate petitions. Sober, and laborious, they are to be found at home; quiet, tho' wretched; visited only by that charity, which like the influence of heaven's great luminary, penetrates into the deepest recesses, and "nothing is hidden from the heat thereof." Thither our Institution goes to find them, and carries to their own houses the best medical, and every other necessary assistance. By the subscriptions of a generous Public, Hospitals have been erected, and are supported, for the same purpose. Without in the least depreciating them, or detracting from their utility, it may yet be truly said, that there are some superior advantages attending the present plan. The wife is not absent from her family, where, though, for a time, she cannot herself do much, yet she can direct what is to be done;

done ; the husband can go forth to his labour, not an hour of which can well be spared ; he is not induced to spend his evenings abroad in public houses, which may occasion his ruin, and that of his family ; being an eye witness to the sorrows of his wife, the love between them is increased ; and affection for the new born offspring will stimulate him afresh to industry.^a

ALL possible circumstances appear to concur in recommending to your notice a scheme thus calculated for the preservation of life, the relief of indigence, the honour of marriage, the encouragement of population, and as a consequence of all, the general welfare of society. It must be approved, as soon as known ; and when approved, it will be encouraged. To these poor, but not the less valuable mothers, in the hour of their utmost distress, and sharpest anguish, open your hands, and open them wide. Whatever you bestow, it will be well bestowed, and properly expended. In every sense truly respectable, honourable and noble are the persons, who have been pleased to take upon themselves the superintendence of the expenditure. Parsimony, at this time would be œconomy ill placed indeed. Spare something in the magnificence of your houses, and style of

^a See *An account of the Benevolent Institution for the sole purpose of delivering poor married women at their own habitations*, printed in the year 1786. By this it appears, that since the establishment in 1780, 9819 persons have been delivered.

living,

living, in the splendor of your furniture, the costliness of your apparel, the luxury of your tables, and your visits to public places; but in your charity spare nothing. On the receipt of your incomes, set aside immediately some certain portion for this purpose. When objects offer, there will be a fund to draw upon: you will give cheerfully, and without grudging; you will always be giving, you will always have something to give: and that which is so given will be returned to you, with increase abundant and eternal, when, in the sight of assembled nations, and all the hosts of heaven, the saying will be verified—"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

THE END.